

portion having a liquid permeable body faceable cover layer, a liquid impermeable garment faceable barrier layer, an absorbent element therebetween, the main body portion further having first and second longitudinal edges opposite each other defining a width dimension, a central longitudinal axis parallel to the longitudinal edges, first and second transverse edges opposite each other defining a length dimension;

a central region having first and second distal ends opposite each other defining a length that is sufficient to cover the woman's labia majora in use;

a first end region, extending from the first distal end of the central region to the first transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's mons pubis in use;

a second end region, extending from the second distal end of the central region to the second transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's posterior perineum in use; and

at least two longitudinally extending hinges located substantially within the center central region adjacent to and inward from each longitudinal edge between the central longitudinal axis and the first and second longitudinal edges, respectively, each hinge adapted to provide a longitudinally extending preferential bending axis, said hinges being spaced apart along at least a portion of their length, wherein at least one hinge has a radius of curvature and an adjacent hinge is substantially straight.

2. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinge that has a radius of curvature is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the hinge that is substantially straight.

3. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein, the hinge that is substantially straight is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the hinge that has a radius of curvature.

4. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinges are co-terminous and contact one another at a respective distal end of each hinge.

5. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinges are formed from a material adapted to impart additional structural rigidity relative to an adjacent region in the absorbent element, the material being selected from the group consisting of a sphagnum-moss containing insert, a densified channel, a strip of polymeric foam, and combinations thereof.

6. The sanitary napkin according to claim 5 wherein the hinges are formed as densified channels.

7. The sanitary napkin according to claim 6 wherein the density of each channel is at least 0.5 g/cc.

8. The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 further comprising a densified end channel in at least one transverse end.

9. The sanitary napkin according to claim 8 wherein said densified end channel is spaced apart from said hinges by at least 3 mm.

10. (Presently Amended) A sanitary napkin for use by a woman for feminine hygiene and adapted to be worn in an undergarment, comprising a main body portion having a liquid permeable body faceable cover layer, a liquid impermeable garment faceable barrier layer, an absorbent element therebetween, the main body portion further having first and second longitudinal edges opposite each other defining a width dimension, a central longitudinal axis parallel to the longitudinal edges, first and second transverse edges opposite each other defining a length dimension;

a central region having first and second distal ends opposite each other defining a length that is sufficient to cover the woman's labia majora in use;

a first end region, extending from the first distal end of the central region to the first transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's mons pubis in use;

a second end region, extending from the second distal end of the central region to the second transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's posterior perineum in use; and

D | at least two longitudinally extending hinges located substantially within the center central region adjacent each longitudinal edge between the central longitudinal axis and the first and second longitudinal edges, respectively, each hinge adapted to provide a longitudinally extending preferential bending axis, said hinge at least two longitudinally extending hinges being spaced apart along at least a portion of their length, wherein said at least two hinges each have a radius of curvature and wherein one hinge has a radius of curvature greater than an adjacent hinge and wherein the sanitary napkin preferentially bends along the hinge.

11. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 10 wherein a first hinge has a greater radius of curvature relative to a second hinge and is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the second hinge that has a lower radius of curvature relative to the first hinge.

12. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 10 wherein the first hinge has a lower radius of curvature and is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the second hinge that has a greater radius of curvature relative to the first hinge.